

Religion and the Paranormal Spring 2024

REL 3938 (Writing Rule 4)

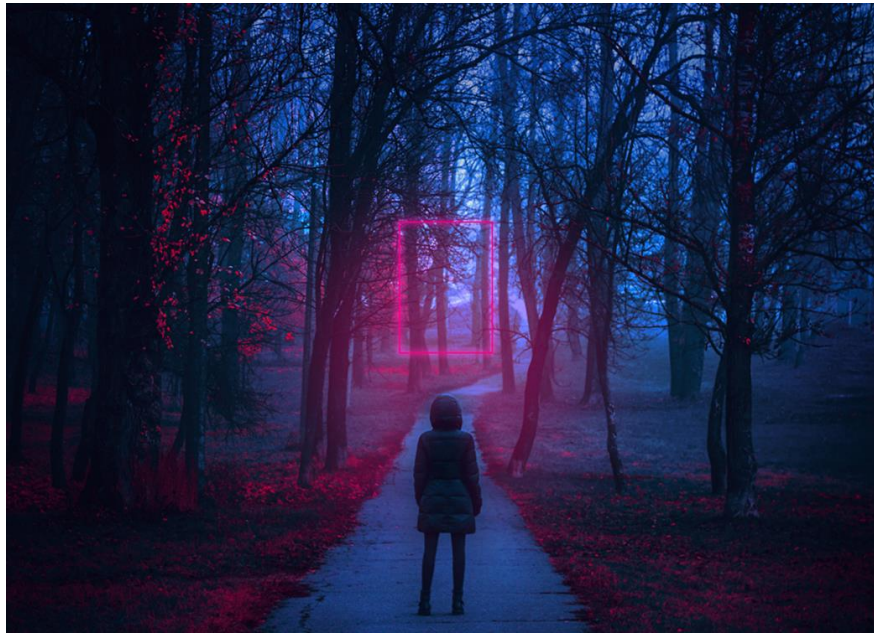
Prof. Erin Prophet; TA, Muktar Sanni

Class Time: MWF. 8 (3:00–3:50 pm)

Class location: Anderson Hall 101

Contact info: Dr. Prophet, eprophet@ufl.edu * Office Hours: M, W: 4:15–5:15 pm; Location: Anderson Hall 130 or online by appointment.

Muktar Sanni, msanni@ufl.edu * Office Hours: M, 1pm–2pm; F, 12pm–1 pm; Location: Anderson 008 or by appointment.



The supernatural seems to force us toward religion, while the paranormal merely forces us to say, "I don't know."
—Steve Volk¹

Pseudoscience speaks to powerful emotional needs that science often leaves unfulfilled....Pseudoscience is embraced, it might be argued, in exact proportion as real science is misunderstood...Religions are often the state-protected nurseries of pseudoscience.
—Carl Sagan²

Psi, the paranormal, and the supernatural are fundamentally linked to deconstructing, change, transition, disorder, marginality, the ephemeral, fluidity, ambiguity, and blurring of boundaries. —George P. Hansen³

¹ *Fringe-ology* 2011, p. 4

² *The Demon-Haunted World* 1996, pp. 14-15.

³ *The Trickster and the Paranormal* 2001, 22.

Brief Course Description

A multi-disciplinary approach to the role of the paranormal in human life and culture, including literary, historical and folkloric studies. The paranormal as a boundary category in modernity at the edge of both religion and science. History of paranormal research in early psychology, and context for cross-cultural interpretation of paranormal events such as possession and healing.

Course Overview

As many as three-quarters of Americans hold at least one paranormal belief. What does this tell us about the future of religion? We will examine the paranormal as an “other” category for both religion and science. Organized religion uses it to distinguish the miraculous from unsanctioned activities like witchcraft and the occult. Science frames itself as the opposite of superstition. And yet in a “disenchanted” world, it’s important to ask why we continue to be fascinated with the paranormal, as seen in the explosion of the topic in film (horror, superheroes), television, gaming and manga. This course takes a multi-methodological approach that includes critical theory, folklore studies, laboratory research, and cognitive science. It also examines the role of the paranormal in human experience of healing and psychological transformation. Topics include telepathy, precognition, UFOs, government-sponsored research (US and Soviet), cryptozoology (Bigfoot, etc.), hauntings, curses and taboos, near-death experiences, possession (including erotic encounters), mediums, and channeling. Students will learn to look critically at both the phenomena and attempts to explain them.

Prerequisite

Achieving sophomore status.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

This course meets the requirements for the University of Florida’s Humanities credit. Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives. A minimum grade of C is required for general education credit.

HUMANITIES SLOS:

- Identify, describe, and explain the history, underlying theory and methodologies used in the course (Content).
- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape thought within the subject area. Approach issues and problems within the discipline from multiple perspectives (Critical Thinking).
- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning clearly and effectively (Communication).

Reflecting the curricular structures of these Gen Ed designations, after taking Religion and the Paranormal, students will be able to:

1. Identify, describe, and explain how the resources available in the humanities (and social sciences) can help in understanding the relationship between religion, science and the paranormal through history (Content SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities).
2. Identify and analyze the relations among different theoretical frameworks in humanistic traditions of thought

relevant for understanding the development of the paranormal as a separate category and its implications for philosophical and scientific inquiry (Critical Thinking SLOs for Gen Ed Humanities)

3. Identify and analyze various methodological approaches and ways of studying religious and paranormal constructs such as literature, ethnography and historical accounts, as well as phenomenological and psychological approaches (Content and Critical Thinking SLOs for Q1 and Gen Ed Humanities and International)
4. Apply relevant theoretical perspectives and analyze how they can be applied with regard to current representations of the paranormal as it relates to secularism and modernity (Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed Humanities)
5. Critically analyze different aspects of the paranormal, such as philosophical approaches to subjective and anomalous events (Critical Thinking SLO for Gen Ed)
6. Critically evaluate different strategies applied to understand the paranormal as it relates to religion, psychology, the philosophy of science and the study of consciousness (Critical Thinking SLO)

Course Themes

Students will be introduced to major theoretical approaches in the study of religion through the lens of the paranormal, become acquainted with pivotal figures and movements, and approach critical questions such as:

- What are the various and contested ways the *paranormal* or *supernatural* are understood, and what is their relationship with organized religion?
 - What are the culturally specific aspects of paranormal belief?
 - How can we think about the various scientific attempts to study and verify/or cordon off the paranormal from acceptable science?
 - What role does the paranormal play in personal transformation and developing meaning and purpose?
 - What role has paranormal experience played in narratives of liberation from political and cultural oppression in the context of race, gender and sexuality?
- How have our discourses, attitudes, and paranormal practices been shaped by, and shaped religions?



"It's entirely your choice: a crop circle followed by a probing, or a probing followed by a crop circle."

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Students will complete the course with a broad knowledge of academic approaches to the paranormal, acquainted both with pivotal figures, movements, and critical questions.

Course Outline and Learning Modules

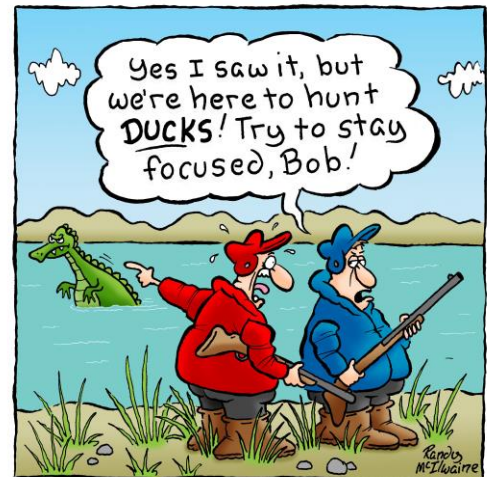
Unit 1: Framings. Explores different historical approaches to the paranormal, including scientific debunking and religious utility of the paranormal, from boundary-setting to proof of divine power.

Unit 2: Spirits. Examines the experience of spirit possession and hauntings, including their relationship to gender and power dynamics. Examines some of the early scientific attempts to study them.

Unit 3: Veridical Approaches. Reviews twentieth-century research aimed at proving the existence of psychic phenomena, including the laboratories at Duke and Princeton, as well as US and Soviet government sponsored research into psychics and UFOs.

Unit 4: Interpretive Approaches. From the imagination to the psyche, various approaches to the paranormal have side-stepped the question of the truth of paranormal activity and focused instead on the folkloric, literary and political potentialities of the paranormal.

Unit 5: Experiential Approaches. What is it like to experience a paranormal event? From erotic encounters to alien abductions and yoga “superpowers,” this unit looks at the various ways that the lives of individuals have been transformed through their frightening or awe-inspiring encounters with a transcendent other.



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Requirements

This course is centered on reading and discussion.

Students will complete two papers totaling 4000 words.

All students will participate in regular small-group discussion. Students are required to bring the readings to class or be able to access them remotely. Excerpts from films and documentaries about the class topics will also be screened during class before or after discussion. In order to ensure an optimum learning experience for the entire class, please do not take this course if you are not prepared to do the reading and engage in thoughtful discussion.

A high priority will be placed on the quality of preparation, participation, and thus also attendance. Blog posts and unit assessments will reinforce the reading and course lectures.

Course Contract

By accepting this syllabus, you are agreeing to participate in frank discussions of many matters that are commonly avoided in public and considered offensive or disturbing by some. These include—but are by no means restricted to—unusual phenomena such as hauntings, alien abductions, as well as ritual practices that are forbidden by some religions, including witchcraft and magic, and accounts of encounters that may be erotic, terrifying, or disturbing. If you are not ready to critically discuss such matters, do not take this course.



"Damn! Of all the times to have an out of body experience!"

Assignments and Grading Rubric

Assignment	Points per Assignment	Percentage Weight
Attendance	n/a	15%
In-class group work (7 assignments)	10 points ea.	5%
Blog Posts (6)	15 points ea.	10%
Short Topic Paper	50 points	10%
In-Depth Term Paper	Paper Proposal (50), Outline (50), Paper draft (100); Revised paper (100)	40%
Midterm Exam	100 points	12%
Quizzes (2)	80 points	8%
Total		100%

The course grading rubric is as follows:

A 94 to 100 A- <94 to 90; B+ <90 to 87; B <87 to 84; B- <84 to 80; C+ <80 to 77; C <77 to 74; C- <74 to 70; D+ <70 to 67; D <67 to 64 D- <64 to 61; E <61 to 0

Grade points are assigned according to the [UF grading policy](#).

Attendance: Taken during each class. The lowest score will be dropped.

Blog Posts: Six blog posts are due discussing prompts related to the readings and lectures.

Short Topic Paper: Students will write an academic paper of at least 1,500 words that cites at least three course readings and three non-course readings.

Research Paper: Students will select a research topic, which must be a critical examination of an important issue related to the study of religion and the paranormal. The topic of the paper must be one on which the student can conduct research and develop a thesis. Topics must be approved by the instructor in the form of a report proposal.

Once the topic is approved, the student will research the topic. Reports must cite a minimum number of five peer-reviewed, academic sources (published by university or academic presses) in addition to five course readings.

The reference lists for each paper must be complete and include all sources cited in the paper, including the minimum number of required course and non-course readings. Use APA citation style (7th edition) for the papers or another style guide approved by the instructor. Papers must be prepared in Microsoft Word and submitted both on paper and online via Turnitin.

Midterm Exam: The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice and essay questions. It represents 12% of the grade.

Writing Rule Requirement

This course confers 4,000 words towards the writing requirement (WR), which ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. While helping students meet the broad learning outcomes of content, communication, and critical thinking, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on students' written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, clarity, coherence, and organization.

Course grades have two components. The papers are graded with both a numerical points grade and a Satisfactory (S) or Unsatisfactory (N) grade. Students who receive an unsatisfactory on a paper will have one additional opportunity to revise and resubmit. ***To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.***

The [University Writing Studio](#) can provide assistance with writing or rewriting of papers:

Style guide: The recommended style guide is the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th edition. Students may use another style with instructor approval.

Papers will be graded based on the following rubric:

Writing Assessment Rubric

	SATISFACTORY (Y)	UNSATISFACTORY (N)
CONTENT	Papers exhibit at least some evidence of ideas that respond to the topic with complexity, critically evaluating and synthesizing sources, and provide at least an adequate discussion with basic understanding of sources.	Papers either include a central idea(s) that is unclear or off- topic or provide only minimal or inadequate discussion of ideas. Papers may also lack sufficient or appropriate sources.
ORGANIZATION AND COHERENCE	Documents and paragraphs exhibit at least some identifiable structure for topics, including a clear thesis statement but may require readers to work to follow progression of ideas.	Documents and paragraphs lack clearly identifiable organization, may lack any coherent sense of logic in associating and organizing ideas, and may also lack transitions and coherence to guide the reader.
ARGUMENT AND SUPPORT	Documents use persuasive and confident presentation of ideas, strongly supported with evidence. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, documents may provide only generalized discussion of ideas or may provide adequate discussion but rely on weak support for arguments.	Documents make only weak generalizations, providing little or no support, as in summaries or narratives that fail to provide critical analysis.
STYLE	Documents use a writing style with word choice appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline. Sentences should display complexity and logical sentence structure. At a minimum, documents will display a less precise use of vocabulary and an uneven use of sentence structure or a writing style that occasionally veers away from word choice or tone appropriate to the context, genre, and discipline.	Documents rely on word usage that is inappropriate for the context, genre, or discipline. Sentences may be overly long or short with awkward construction. Documents may also use words incorrectly.
MECHANICS	Papers will feature correct or error-free presentation of ideas. At the weak end of the Satisfactory range, papers may contain some spelling, punctuation, or grammatical errors that remain unobtrusive so they do not muddy the paper's argument or points.	Papers contain so many mechanical or grammatical errors that they impede the reader's understanding or severely undermine the writer's credibility.

Course Policies

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are highlighted in this class. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the [online catalog](#). Do not register for this class if you cannot attend on time. Tardiness harms your understanding of the material and disrupts the class. Please let the professor or TA know about any planned excused absences (for religious holidays, athletic events, or other reasons) as soon as possible, and at least 24 hours in advance. For unplanned absences (due to illness or emergency), please let us know as soon as possible and provide paper or electronic documentation (e.g., doctor's note) if possible. Absences due to illness will be excused with a physician note. While some absences are unavoidable, if you expect to be unable to make class on a regular basis, you must receive permission in advance. Make-up assignments will be provided for those with excused absences, and recordings may be available for students with excused absences.

Policy on Class Recordings

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to review and for enrolled students who are unable to attend. Students who participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded during class, contact the instructor. If you are given access to course recordings, do not share them with anyone who is not registered in the class. Small group discussions in class will not be recorded.

Student Recordings of Class Lectures

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session. Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Disability Policy

Any student with a documented disability seeking academic adjustments or accommodations (including those involving the use of technology) is requested to speak with me during the first two weeks of class. All such discussions will remain as confidential as possible. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center by providing appropriate

documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester. The Disability Resource Center may be contacted here: 352-392-8565; www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

Communication with Instructor

Please enable Canvas to forward all course announcements and instructor communications to your email so that you stay informed. To contact me, use the Canvas mail feature. You may also email me directly but communication through Canvas is preferred.

Use of Technology

During class, electronic devices may be used only for note-taking or participation in the course, such as accessing readings or completing online polls. Headphones may not be worn in class. Students who are misusing technology may be asked to switch to paper note-taking. Paper notetaking may actually lead to better comprehension: <https://www.thecut.com/2015/07/case-against-laptops-in-the-classroom.html>

Syllabus Agreement

The electronic (Canvas) versions of assignments and the syllabus are the most current. I reserve the right to change any of the reading assignments or the ordering of the lectures. The grading principles and requirements, however, will not change.

Returned Assignments

Assignments will generally be graded no later than one week after they were due.

Late or Missing Assignments

Late assignments will be penalized and may not receive credit.

Academic Honesty and the Honor Code

Students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Students caught plagiarizing or cheating may fail the course. In addition, they will be reported to the appropriate university authorities. Please keep in mind that plagiarism does not consist only in copying verbatim someone else's material and presenting it as if it were yours. It also includes taking ideas (even paraphrased!) from an author without citation. Downloading material from the Internet or a generative AI site like ChatGPT and presenting it as if it were yours is a form of cheating and will also be subject to the same action. See the [policy website](#) for more information.

Canvas Reading Assignment Pages are Authoritative

Course reading assignments may be modified. The syllabus distributed at the beginning of class may be updated. The course reading assignment pages on Canvas are the operative version, so to be sure of your assignment, check Canvas. The course assignments and weighting will remain as they are in the syllabus, though due dates may be adjusted. Students should set up their Canvas account so that they receive instructor announcements via Canvas directly in their email.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations during the available interval. Summary results of these assessments will be available to students. Evaluations are completed at the [Gator Evals site](#).

Schedule of Course Readings and Assignments

Day		Topic	Readings	Assignments
	Unit 1: Framings			
Week 1 Lecture 1	Monday, Jan. 8	Syllabus and Student Learning Goals		
Week 1 Lecture 2	Wed. Jan 10	Methodological Overview	Volk "Introduction"	
Week 1 Lecture 3	Fri. Jan 12	Methodological Overview (cont.)	Laycock "Approaching the Paranormal"	In class: Group assignments
Week 2	Mon. Jan 15	No class—Holiday		
Week 2 Lecture 4	Wed. Jan 17	Scientific Debunking: "Pseudoscience and Superstition"	Sagan <i>The Demon-Haunted World</i> ch. 1 (13-22); Asprey, "The Problem of Disenchantment"	Before class: Assessment 1 (online)
Week 2 Lecture 5	Fri. Jan 19	Religious Debunking: Whose Miracles	Kripal, "Reimagining the 'Super' in the Study of Religion," xv-xxxi	In class: Group work 1
Week 3 Lecture 6	Mon. Jan 22	Religious Debunking: Magic	Bailey, "Magic Contested and Condemned"	Before class: Blog post 1 on Debunking
Week 3 Lecture 7	Wed. Jan 24	Religious Debunking (cont.):	Bader, Baker, and Mencken, "Round Trip to Hell in a Flying Saucer" Hansen, <i>The Trickster and the Paranormal</i> Ch. 1, 18-34	
Week 3 Lecture 8	Fri. Jan 26	The Messiness of Paranormal Phenomena: Haunting NDEs	Volk ch. 1, "On Death and Not Dying"	
Week 4 Lecture 9	Mon. Jan 29	Debunking the Debunkers	Hufford, "Rational Supernatural Belief"	
	Unit 2: Spirits			

Day		Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 4 Lecture 10	Wed. Jan 31	Possession and Power	Gustafsson, "The Problem," ch. 1	
Week 4 Lecture 10 (cont.)	Fri. Feb. 2	Possession and Power (cont.)	Keller, "Spirit Possession" pp. 66-75	In class: Film clips, Group work 2
Week 5 Lecture 11	Mon. Feb. 5	Spiritualism	Blum, <i>Ghost Hunters</i> Prelude and ch. 1, "The Night Side" Crabtree, "Mesmerism and the Psychological Dimension of Mediumship," pp. 9-18	Before class: Blog post 2 on Possession;
Week 5 Lecture 12	Wed. Feb. 7	Telepathy, Hypnosis and Psychical Research	Moore, "Psychical Research as Psychology—from William James to James Hyslop," 133-156. Crabtree, "Mesmerism," pp. 18-29	
Week 5 Lecture 13	Fri. Feb. 9	Telepathy (cont.)	Sheldrake ch. 2, "Dogs" Hansen ch. 10, 117-129, "Prominent Psychics"	
Week 6 Lecture 14	Mon. Feb. 12	Channeling and Automatic Writing	Bradby, "Channeling—The Cinderella of the New Age?" 340-346; 340-361.	Short Topic Paper (due before class online and paper copy in class)
Week 6 Lecture 14 (cont.)	Wed. Feb. 14	Channeling and Automatic Writing cont. and Review for midterm		In class: Review for Midterm Unit 1 and 2 recap (online) Group work 3 on Telepathy and Mediumship
Week 6 Lecture 19	Fri. Feb. 16	UFOs and Folklore	Pasulka, "From Purgatory to the UFO Phenomenon"	
Week 7	Mon. Feb. 19	MIDTERM	Midterm covers Weeks 1-6	
		Unit 3: Veridical Approaches		

Day		Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 7 Lecture 15	Wed. Feb. 21	Veridical approaches 1: ESP and Psi	Horn, Preface, ch. 1-2 (1-8, 15-52)	In class: Review midterm
Week 7 Lecture 15A	Fri. Feb. 23	Charles Fort and the Unexplained	Kripal 2011a, ch. 2, "Charles Fort and the Fantastic Narrative of Western Occulture"	
Week 8	Mon. Feb. 26	NO CLASS		Attend Symposium Tue., Feb. 27 on Charles Fort
Week 8 Lecture 15	Wed. Feb. 28	Veridical Approaches 1 cont.: Duke Parapsychology	Kelly, Mediums and Apparitions	
Week 8 Lecture 16	Fri. Mar. 1	Veridical approaches (cont.): PEAR and Psi	Horn, epilogue; Radin, 148-157 Horn, ch. 8 (optional)	Before class: Blog post 3 on Fort and the Unexplained
Week 9	Mon. Mar. 4	PEAR	Jahn and Dunne, 195-201	Due by midnight: Term Paper Proposal Guest Speaker
Week 9 Lecture 17	Wed. Mar. 6	Veridical approaches 2: Cold War, Russian psychics, Remote Viewing	Horn, ch. 9, 177-199 Optional: Kripal, "The Remote Viewing Literature and the Imaginal"	
Week 9 Lecture 18	Fri. Mar. 8	UFOs and Veridical Approaches	Kean, <i>UFOs</i> , Preface (xi-xii), Introduction (1-14), ch. 24, "Governor Fyfe Symington and the Movement Towards Change" (247-261).	
	Mon. Mar. 11- Fri. Mar. 15	NO CLASS SPRING BREAK!		
		Unit 4: Interpretive Approaches		
Week 10 Lecture 20	Mon. Mar. 18	UFOs (cont.)	Vallee, <i>Passport to Magonia</i> , "Nurslings of Immortality," 135-164.	In class: Group work 4 on UFOs

Day		Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 10 Lecture 21	Wed. Mar. 20	Psychological Approaches	Hewett, "The Psychoanalytic Occult in Freud and Contemporary Theory"	
Week 10 Lecture 22	Fri. Mar. 22	Synchronicity	Main, "Religion, Science, and Synchronicity"	Before class: Blog post 4 on UFOs Group work 5 on Psychological Approaches
Week 11 Lecture 23	Mon. Mar. 25	Erotics and the Poltergeist	Laursen, "The Poltergeist at the Intersection of the Spirit and the Material"	Final Paper outline due
Week 11 Lecture 24	Wed. Mar. 27	Supernatural and the Racial Other	Finley, "The Supernatural in the African American Experience"	
Week 11 Lecture 25	Fri. Mar. 29	Demons and Daemons through Culture	Bastian, "Mami Wata, Mr. White, and the Sirens off Bar Beach"	Blog post 5 on Psychological Approaches
		Unit 5: Experiential Approaches		
Week 12 Lecture 26	Mon. Apr. 1	Erotics and Religion	Homewood, "The Supersensual Supernatural: Sexual Spirits in the History of Christianity"	
Week 12 Lecture 27	Wed. Apr. 3	Erotics and Alien Abduction	Strieber and Kripal, <i>The Super Natural</i> , ch. 8, "Pain," and 9, "Super Sexualities"	
Week 12 Lecture 27 (cont.)	Fri. Apr. 5	Erotics and Religion (cont.)		Film Group work 6 on Erotics
Week 13 Lecture 28	Mon. Apr. 8	Cryptozoology	Loxton and Prothero, "Cryptozoology: Real Science or Pseudoscience?"	
Week 13 Lecture 28	Wed. Apr. 10	Cryptozoology	Loxton and Prothero, "The Yeti"	Asynchronous online class (lecture)
Week 13	Fri. Apr. 12	NO CLASS		Due by class time: Blog Post 6, Race and Culture

Day		Topic	Readings	Assignments
Week 14 Lecture 29	Mon. Apr. 15	Superpowers and Superheroes	Kripal, <i>Mutants and Mystics</i> , ch. 1, 1-5, 22-30; Optional: Kripal, <i>Mutants and Mystics</i> , ch. 1, 1-30; ch. 4, "Mutation: X-Men Before their Time," 173-216. Optional: Kripal, <i>The Flip</i> , ch. 3, "Consciousness and Cosmos"	Draft of Final Paper DUE (paper copy, in class)
Week 14 Lecture 30	Wed. Apr. 17	Supernatural Yoga	Jacobsen, "Extraordinary Capacities in the Religions of South Asia: Yoga Powers and Cosmology"	
Week 14 Lecture 31	Fri. Apr. 19	Superpowers and Superheroes (cont.)	Kripal, "Reimagining the 'Super,'" pp. xxxi-xliii Review for final quiz	In class: Group work 7 on Research Projects
Week 15	Mon. Apr. 22	Presentation of Research		
Week 15	Wed. Apr. 24	Presentation of Research		Final Quiz
Reading Days		NO FINAL EXAM		Due if requested: Revised term paper

Reading List (Includes Required and Optional Selections)

- Asprem, Egil. 2017. "The Problem of Disenchantment and Modern Transformations of the Supernatural." In *Religion: Super Religion*, edited by Jeffrey J Kripal, 27–42. Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Cengage Learning.
- Bader, 2017. Christopher D., Joseph O. Baker, and F. Carson Mencken. *Paranormal America (Second Edition): Ghost Encounters, UFO Sightings, Bigfoot Hunts, and Other Curiosities in Religion and Culture*. NYU Press, Chapter 5.
- Bailey, Michael D. 2017. *Magic: The Basics*. London: Routledge, Chapter 3.
- Bastian, Misty L. 1998. "Mami Wata, Mr. White, and the Sirens off Bar Beach: Spirits and Dangerous Consumption in the Nigerian Popular Press." In *Afrika und das Andere: Alterität und Innovation*, edited by Heike Schmidt and Albert Wirz, 21–31. Hamburg: Lit Verlag.
- Blum, Deborah. 2007. *Ghost Hunters: William James and the Search for Scientific Proof of Life After Death*. Penguin, 2007.
- Bradby, Ruth. 2015. "Channeling—The Cinderella of the New Age?: A Course in Miracles, the Seth Texts, and Definition in New Age Spiritualities." In *Handbook of Spiritualism and Channeling*, edited by Cathy Gutierrez, 340–61. Leiden: Brill.
https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004264083_017.
- Crabtree, Adam. 2015. "Mesmerism and the Psychological Dimension of Mediumship." In *Handbook of Spiritualism and Channeling*, 7–31.
https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004264083_003
- Finley, Stephen C. 2017. "The Supernatural in the African American Experience." In *Religion: Super Religion*, edited by Jeffrey J Kripal, 231–246. Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Cengage Learning.
- Hansen, George P. 2001. *The Trickster and the Paranormal*. Xlibris Corporation, 2001. Chapters 1, 10.
- Hewitt, Marsha Aileen. 2017. "The Psychoanalytic Occult in Freud and Contemporary Theory." In *Religion: Super Religion*, 43–60,
- Horn, Stacy. 2009. *Unbelievable: Investigations into Ghosts, Poltergeists, Telepathy, and Other Unseen Phenomena, from the Duke Parapsychology Laboratory*. Harper Collins, 2009.
- Homewood, Nathanael J. 2017. "The Supersensual Supernatural: Sexual Spirits in the History of Christianity." In *Religion: Super Religion*, edited by Jeffrey J Kripal, 341–326. Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Cengage Learning.
- Hufford, David. 2017. "Rational Supernatural Belief: Debunking the Debunkers." In *Religion: Super Religion*, edited by Jeffrey J Kripal, 3–25. Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Cengage Learning.
- Jacobsen, Knut A. 2017. "Extraordinary Capacities in the Religions of South Asia: Yoga Powers and Cosmology." In *Religion: Super Religion*, edited by Jeffrey J Kripal, 125–

138. Macmillan Interdisciplinary Handbooks. Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Cengage Learning.

Jahn, Robert and Brenda Dunne. 2007. "The PEAR Proposition." *Journal of Scientific Exploration*. 3(3) May 2007, 205-226. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.explore.2007.03.005>

Kean, Leslie. 2011. *UFOs: Generals, Pilots, and Government Officials Go on the Record*. Crown Publishing Group. Preface, Introduction, ch. 24.

Keller, Mary. 2015. "Spirit Possession." In *Handbook of Spiritualism and Channeling*, ed. Cathy Gutierrez. Leiden: Brill. 66-86. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004264083_006.

Kelly, Emily Williams. 2018. "Mediums, Apparitions, and Deathbed Experiences." In *Mind Beyond Brain*, ed. David E. Presti, pp. 69-90. Columbia University Press.

Kripal, Jeffrey J. 2011a. *Authors of the Impossible: The Paranormal and the Sacred*. University of Chicago Press. Chapter 2, "Scattering the Seeds of a Super-Story: Charles Fort and the Fantastic Narrative of Western Occulture."

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Films and Documentaries

We will watch short excerpts from a number of films and documentaries in class. Below is a selection of films that relate to the topics we will be discussing.

Possession/Haunting

- The Exorcist*. Dir. William Friedkin. 1973.
- The Others*. Dir. Alejandro Amenábar. 2001.
- The Babadook*. Dir. Jennifer Kent.
- The Haunting*. Dir. Robert Wise. 1963.

Psychic Powers

- The Conjuring*. Dir. James Wan. 2013.
- K-PAX*. Dir. Ian Softley. 2001.
- Phenomenon*. Dir. Jon Turteltaub. 1996.
- X-Men*. Dir. Bryan Singer. 2000. Marvel Entertainment Group.
- Doctor Strange*. Dir. Scott Derrickson. 2016. Marvel Entertainment Group

UFOs and Aliens

- Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. Dir. Steven Spielberg. 1977

Websites

Center for Inquiry <https://skepticalinquirer.org/>

Society for Psychical Research (UK) <https://www.spr.ac.uk/>

International Consciousness Research Laboratories: <http://icrl.org/>

Additional resources such as links to podcasts, music, slideshows, video, music, and websites, will be made available during the course. Students are encouraged to send the instructor their own ideas for resources.

Campus Resources

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

U Matter, We Care: If you or someone you know is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, or visit umatter.ufl.edu/ to refer or report a concern and a team member will reach out to the student in distress.

Counseling and Wellness Center: Visit <https://counseling.ufl.edu> or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.

Student Health Care Center: Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or visit <https://shcc.ufl.edu>

University Police Department: Visit <https://police.ufl.edu/> or call 352-392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies).

UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; <https://ufhealth.org/emergency-room-trauma-center>.

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

E-learning technical support: Contact the UF Computing Help Desk at 352-392-4357 or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.

Career Connections Center: Reitz Union Suite 1300, 352-392-1601. Career assistance and counseling services career.ufl.edu/.

Library Support: various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.

Teaching Center: Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352-392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.

Writing Studio: 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.